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# THE ROMANCE OF HISTORY

IN

"THE BLACK COUNTY,"

AND

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# THE ROMANCE OF WAR

IN THE

CAREER OF GEN. ROBERT SMALLS,

"THE HERO OF THE PLANTER."

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BY CHARLES COWLEY.

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LOWELL, MASS.

1882.

Family of  
William Lloyd Garrison  
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## PREFATORY.

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"I have always felt most kindly towards the colored people of the United States, and wish them all success in their laudable efforts to maintain the status of 'free and equal citizens' of our great republic. Whenever it has been my duty to speak to them, I have generally advised them to shake off their old feeling of dependence on the white race, and to depend on themselves, and on the practice of industry, thrift, and the virtues common to all mankind, to reach that higher plane of civilization to which they have a perfect right to aspire, and now a good opportunity to gain."—*Gen. William T. Sherman.*

While attached to the staff of the late Admiral Dahlgren, as Judge-Advocate of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, whose headquarters were at Port Royal, I took pains to inform myself touching the history of that region, so rich in events, tragic, romantic or otherwise interesting. I often trod the deck of the famous steamer Planter, and became personally acquainted with her gallant commander, Robert Smalls. The captain and the Planter had already won that unique niche in the history of the civil war from which they can never be displaced. (See my book, "Leaves from a Lawyer's Life Afloat and Ashore," pp. 53—55)

To those who heard my oration in the National Soldiers' Cemetery, at Beaufort, on Decoration Day, 1881; to those who heard my lecture on the "Romance of the History of the Black County"; to those who heard my speech at the reception of General Smalls in Boston on the twentieth anniversary of the running-away of the Planter; and to those who have read the reports of that oration, that lecture or that address in the newspapers, portions of this narrative will not be new; but I prefer to repeat what I have heretofore said, rather than to affect novelty by clothing the same facts in a new set of phrases.

THE AUTHOR.



## The Romance of History in "the Black County."

The colored population of South Carolina is greater in number, and greater in proportion to the white population than that of any other state in the Union. It numbers 604,332; while the white population numbers only 391,105. The preponderance of the colored population over the white is greater in Beaufort County than in any other county in the State. It there numbers 27,752, while the white population numbers only 2,438. Thus the Palmetto State, is, by eminence, "the Black State," and Beaufort County, is, by eminence, "the Black County"; though these terms are often spoken with an accent of reproach which is not deserved. Beaufort County lies on the seaboard, at the southern extremity of the State. It is fifty-eight miles in length and thirty-three in breadth, and contains about a million and a quarter acres. It lies mostly on the mainland, but includes a portion of that beautiful archipelago called the Sea Islands, St. Helena Island, Port Royal Island, and many others of less note.

The history of this region carries us back to the heroic age of America—the age of discoverers, explorers and colonizers. St. Helena Sound, Port Royal, Beaufort Bay, and Broad River, were among the first American waters ever ploughed by European keels. The Indians called this region Chicora; but neither the Indian name nor the Indian title was respected by European powers. It was claimed by England as part of Virginia; by the French as part of Nouvelle France; by Spain as part of that Land of Flowers where Ponce de Leon sought the Fountain of Youth.

It was in the destiny of "the Black County" to be conspicuously associated with four great visions of empire, which vanished one after another "as a dream when one awaketh." These four imperial visions were those of Spain,

France, England and the Southern Confederacy.

In the year 1520, two vessels from Santo Domingo visited these shores for the purpose of catching Indians and carrying them to La Plata, to be sold as slaves. It is a significant fact that the first white men who landed in South Carolina came openly and avowedly for the purpose of stealing their fellowmen, the Indians of Chicora, and of carrying them away into slavery.

Lucas Vasques D'Ayllon, a distinguished Spanish senator and judge, was the leading spirit in this nefarious enterprise; and he is supposed by some to have accompanied the slave-catching expedition. In honor of the saint on whose feast they landed (August 13, 1520), they named the point Cape St. Helena. In honor of Captain Jordan, who commanded one or both of these ships, they gave to what we call Broad River (or perhaps the Combahee), the name of *Rio Jordan*. Having decoyed on board their vessels as many of the Indians as they could carry, they suddenly weighed anchor, and put to sea. A terrible storm came on; one of the ships foundered, and all on board perished. The other ship reached La Plata in safety; but the planters who had fitted out these vessels, lost all that they invested in the voyage. The Indians became sick and melancholy, refused to receive nourishment, and all save one died. The sole survivor was a young man whom D'Ayllon named Francisco Chicora. He was taken to Spain and treated very kindly by D'Ayllon, and finally became as consummate a liar as D'Ayllon himself, fully confirming and exaggerating all that D'Ayllon said about the gold, the silver, the diamonds and other treasures in which Chicora abounded.

In 1525 D'Ayllon visited these shores



on another slave-catching expedition, with three vessels, one of which was stranded. That was the first shipwreck in the waters of what is now the United States. But the Indians of Chincora had not forgotten the outrage of the former expedition. They attacked the slave-catchers, killed some of them, wounded others and drove the rest away.

In 1562 a far different man from D'Ayillon came to these shores—the sturdy Huguenot leader, the brave Norman soldier and sailor, the saint, the hero and the martyr, JOHN RIBAUT. That magnificent bay which he named “Port Royal,” will perpetuate his memory when monuments of marble shall have crumbled into dust. On the shore of Beaufort Bay Ribault built a fort, which in honor of his sovereign, Charles the Ninth of France, he called Charlesfort. (Note A.)

Thirty men, Normans in blood and Huguenots in religion, were placed here by Ribault, to “hold the fort” for France, when from Mexico to the North Pole there was not another civilized man on the whole continent. This Landing of the Huguenots took place fifty-eight years before the Landing of the Pilgrims. “Let Jamestown and Plymouth Rock hide their diminished heads”! Not one of the Pilgrims had then come into the world, except that solitary “geological pilgrim,” Plymouth Rock, destined to become the stepping-stone of the Mayflowers’ band and the blarney-stone of their descendants. We have been accustomed to speak of St. Augustine as the oldest town in the United States; but this settlement of Charlesfort by Ribault was three years earlier.

The first governor of this first European colony in the United States, Albert de la Pierria, proved a tyrant. His men revolted, put him to death, and elected Nicholas Barre in his place. Somewhere near the site of Charlesfort the body of the first governor of Carolina was laid in the earth; but of him, as of another of her chief magistrates, Christopher Gadsden, and as was said of the leader of Israel, it may be said that “no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.”

It was through no fault of Ribault that the garrison of Charlesfort afterwards hauled down the flag which he here unfurled and returned to their native France. Their return voyage was

made in a vessel built by themselves on this island—the first sea-going ship ever built in what is now the United States.

In 1565 the bloody and blood-thirsty Menendez founded St. Augustine, and sent John Pardo to St. Helena to hold this region for Spain. Pardo built a fort on the southwest point, which in honor of Philip the Second of Spain he called Fort St. Philip, and left a garrison there. But, like the French garrison of Charlesfort, this Spanish garrison of Fort St. Phillip were consumed with *ennui* and homesickness. They revolted against their commander, seized a vessel which came to them with supplies, and sailed for Cuba, but were wrecked on the Florida Keyes—the first of a long list of shipwrecks that have made the Keyes the terror of sailors.

We are accustomed to say that the first African captives imported into this country were brought to Jamestown, in a Dutch man-of-war, in 1620; (more properly in 1619); but this is not true. This Governor Menendez imported five hundred African slaves into St. Augustine in 1665. Thus slavery in America was coeval with the first settlement in America.

The events which have given the name of Menendez an immortality of infamy—the destruction of Fort Caroline on St. John’s River and the massacre of the Huguenots at Matanzas Inlet—were “out of our diocese.” So with the retaliatory acts of the French commander De Gourgas. All these I pass by, except the massacre. The founder of Charlesfort was one of the victims of that butchery, and his tragic death which was the grandest event in his heroic life (for death is but an event in life) cannot be passed by. (Note B.)

Ribault had been shipwrecked, with three hundred and fifty of his men, and had fallen into the hands of Menendez.

It was in the year 1665, when Spain and France were in peace and amity. Yet this infamous Menendez did not scruple to butcher all these men like sheep. First, they were all disarmed. Then their hands were tied behind their backs, and they were rowed across the Matanzas Inlet, ten at a time. There in a valley out of sight of any human eye save their murderers, they were stabbed to death with poniards. Those who were not yet brought to this valley of slaughter, were kept in ignorance of the fate of their comrades and of the fate that



awaited themselves. But the Huguenot faith sustained them to the last. Ribault repeated portions of the psalms, and soothed himself with these philosophic reflections: that he was then sixty years old; that he must surely die at some time; that he would not live more than twenty years any way; that to die there and then was only to have his life somewhat abridged; and that in whatever world he might be, he was safe in the hands of a beneficent God. With such sentiments in their souls and the words of the Psalmist upon their tongues, these sturdy soldiers and sailors met death like martyrs, and they were martyrs. "Not as unto Frenchmen but as unto Huguenots" was this bloody butchery avowedly done. Even the hospitality of the grave was denied to them. Their bodies were left in the valley of slaughter, their bones picked by the beasts of the forests, their flesh devoured by the fowls of the air.

After this tragedy at Matanzas Inlet, France made no further attempt at colonization in this part of our continent, though her struggle for the mastery of the destinies of America was continued for two hundred years, and ended only with the conquest of Canada, in 1759. Spain's dream of supremacy in America began earlier and was cherished longer than that of France. Mexico, Peru, Cuba, Hayti and other dependencies were not enough for Spain's ambition. She held Florida for more than three hundred years (counting from Ponce de Leon's visit), and she originally claimed the entire territory as far north as Canada.

On the pretence that this territory belonged to Florida, when Capt. Hilton, in 1770, brought to the island which bears his name, a party of English emigrants under Colonel Sayle, the Spanish governor of St. Augustine compelled the emigrants to abandon the settlement which they had begun, and which might have become the commercial emporium of the South. By compelling the removal of Col. Sayle's party to the Ashiey River, Spain caused the misplacement of Charleston. Hitherto this error has remained uncorrected; but nature seems to have ordained that the New York of the South, the Liverpool of the South, whenever it shall arise, shall be built at Port Royal. Sir John Yeamans, the first English governor of the Carolinas, fully appreciated the value of Port

Royal, and, instead of allowing the Spaniards to drive him from St. Helena, he compelled them to quit that island and return to St. Augustine.

This Sir John Yeamans had previously been governor of Barbadoes; and upon coming to Carolina he, naturally enough, brought African servants with him. Thus the first Colonial governor and the first African slaves came to South Carolina together. Pity that Colonial government and slavery were not abolished together. How much more honorable and glorious would our history have been during the last hundred years, had the Fathers of the Revolution coupled with their Declaration of Independence the further declaration that on and after the Fourth of July, 1776, there should be no slavery in their new-born "Republic of Republics!"

On the same pretence, that this region belonged to Spain, when Lord Cardross brought a party of English and Scottish immigrants to Port Royal Island, in 1681, three Spanish galleys came up from St. Augustine with a force which killed some of the immigrants, whipped more, plundered all of them, and broke up the settlement. It has been the practice of the English-speaking world to condemn Spain for holding this territory with so firm a grasp. But it was as patent to the Spanish explorers as it was to the French and the English colonizers or as it is to us, that there is nowhere on this planet a finer bay than Port Royal, and that, in capable hands, this bay could not fail to become one of the chief commercial marts of the New World. We may well rejoice that the civilization established here is neither Spanish nor French, but essentially English; and yet no nation is to be condemned for seeking to improve its own opportunities.

Spain at last relaxed her hold; and in 1700 Port Royal Island was permanently settled by the Huguenots from Beaufort in Anjou. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the tradition of Ribault's settlement at Port Royal had been handed down from sire to son among the French Puritans of Normandy and Anjou, in hallowed association with the tradition of Ribault's martyrdom in Florida; and thus the sacred recollections of an effort in colonization which deserved success, but missed it, may have prompted that second effort



in colonization which both deserved success and won it.

The town of Beaufort was laid out in 1717. As English influence predominated in the colony, the Huguenots generally became Episcopalians; and a church of that denomination was built in 1720. The importation of African slaves, partly from the West Indies but chiefly from the coast of Guinea, was much encouraged. In 1724 Beaufort district contained 18,000 slaves and 14,000 free whites.

It is not to be forgotten that while the white people of South Carolina were filling the colony with slaves from Africa, thousands of these captives found freedom and a home in Florida; and when the colonial government of South Carolina pressed the Spanish governor of Florida to surrender these fugitive slaves to him, the king of Spain ordered compensation to be made to the masters for such slaves in money, but refused to return one of them to slavery. The first colored soldiers ever seen on this continent were fugitive slaves from South Carolina, enlisted by the Spanish governor of Florida, more than a hundred years before our civil war. "Of these negro fugitives," says Dr. Ramsay, "the governor of Florida formed a regiment, appointed officers from among themselves, allowed them the same pay, and clothed them in the same uniform with the regular Spanish soldiers."—(Ramsay's History of South Carolina, p. 62.) There is much to be said in extenuation of the censures so often pronounced against Spain by our historians, for the part she bore in the troubles from which "the Black County" suffered in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But this I pass by, as I do the war with the Yemassee, which ended with the great battle at Saltcatchers, in 1715.

Salmon's Modern History, published about 1742, relates that the headquarters of the British squadron on this coast had already been established at Beaufort.\*

\*"The town of Beaufort is situated on the Island of Port Royal, in thirty-one degrees forty minutes north latitude, an hundred miles south of Charlestown—the continent and island forming a fine, capacious harbour, capable of receiving the Royal navy of England, if it can get over the bar, as ships of good burthen may, there being eighteen foot water at low water. The Island on which the town stands consists of near one thousand acres, and is navigable all round for

When these words were written, not a vestige remained of the presence and power of Spain in this region except the names of St. Helena and St. Philip and the misplacement of Charleston. In 1759 the dream of a French empire in America, so long cherished by Ribault's countrymen, vanished in the smoke of battle on the Plains of Abraham. Thenceforth France exerted her utmost powers to fan into a flame every spark of discontent in the British Colonies. In less than a quarter of a century, the triumph of these French intrigues was complete. The same generation which saw the French flag expelled from Nouvelle France saw also the British flag expelled from New England. "Yorktown" was the grim reply which France made to England's demand for the surrender of Quebec.

Much more remains than a few geographical names, such as Beaufort, Charlesfort and Port Royal, to attest the former presence of the French in "the Black County." Much of the best blood in South Carolina has come from those French Puritans, the Huguenots, who found refuge here after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; and it has mingled, often beyond recognition, with the blood of England, Ireland, Scotland, Switzerland and Germany.

The Revolution of 1776 was of no immediate advantage to Beaufort, but rather the reverse; for the ships of the British Navy ceased to come to Port Royal to escape the fevers of the tropics, and Beaufort was balked of the growth which awaited her as a mart of commerce and a naval rendezvous under the British crown.

Without dwelling longer on the connection of "the Black County" with the

boats and pettyagers, and one half of it for shipping, having four fathom water close to the high bluff, so that ships may load and unload from the shore, without the assistance of boats. The harbour is secured by a fort built about five years since, in which culverins are mounted: but the town and island have no fortification (unless erected very lately), nor is the harbor so well fortified as a place of this importance deserves, especially as it lies so near Spanish Florida, and is said to be demanded by the Spaniards, as a part of their territories. There is not indeed above fifty or three score houses in the town of Beaufort at present; but from its advantageous situation and the goodness of its harbour, it is expected that this town will one day be the capital of South Carolina. It is already the station of the British squadron in those seas."—Salmon.



purposes of Spain, of France, and of Great Britain, to control the destinies of this continent, I come now to its connection with the fourth and last "Lost Cause." When the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron was formed, in October 1861, the plan proposed by the commander of that squadron was to enter Bull's Bay and establish his headquarters there; but Capt. G. V. Fox, the assistant secretary of the Navy, suggested that Port Royal was a much more desirable place for a naval depot and for the headquarters of the co-operating army. The suggestion was a wise one. Du Pont came, saw, and conquered Port Royal and the Sea Islands; and in the battle which secured these results, he illustrated to perfection the science and the poetry of war. "Swinging round the circle" in Port Royal Bay, he silenced and captured the Confederate batteries without giving the Confederates any chance to inflict any considerable injury upon him. So perfect a combination of circle-sailing with circle-fighting had never been seen before. "The Black County" was detached from the Southern Confederacy and Beaufort became the headquarters of General Saxton, the military governor of South Carolina and Georgia. Thus was realized the expectation mentioned by the historian already quoted, though in a different way from any which he could have expected.

Beaufort became the military capital of South Carolina. The events which took place in "the Black County" between the capture of Port Royal and the capture of Savannah and Charleston, have been but partially and very imperfectly recorded by writers on either side. Even the reports of the Federal war commanders on the battles of Honey Hill and Deveau's Neck have not yet been published, and many histories of the war have been written, in which these battles are hardly mentioned. Here were formed the colored regiments of Colonels Higginson and Montgomery, the First and Second South Carolina volunteers; and this, too, was the department in which the two colored regiments of Massachusetts Infantry (the Fifty-Fourth and Fifty-Fifth), commanded by Colonels Shaw and Hartwell, principally served. If the history of this department is wanting in brilliant feats of generalship, it is specially interesting as a record of valuable ser-

vice and heroic endurance on the part of the rank and file. More interesting still will be the record of the sacrifices and services of the ladies and gentlemen who devoted themselves to the education and improvement of the freed-men.

The results of the war in "the Black County" have not been equally beneficial in all places. Where the rum traffic has prevailed, there is idleness and unthrift, and some of the Sea Islands, which were once under cultivation, are blighted and decayed. St. Simon's Island, where Mrs. Frances Kemble Butler wrote her famous "Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation," suffered much by the war. But generally the condition of the people has been much improved. The slave-owners formerly boasted that the negroes were "the best peasantry in the world"; and in the years that have passed since emancipation, the negroes have done much to prove themselves so.

Of all the cabins that were occupied by the colored people on St. Helena Island (for example), when I visited it, during the war, there is scarcely one so used now. The laboring people largely own lands themselves, and live in frame-houses, presenting a comely and comfortable appearance. Their children attend the schools, making good use of their opportunities. Improved methods have been introduced in their agricultural operations; and by these, as well as by the use of phosphates, the quantity and value of the crops have been largely increased.

According to the census of 1880, the cotton lands of Beaufort County were 11,570 acres, and the cotton crop 2,740 bales. The Indian corn lands were 14,735 acres, and the crop 135,757 bushels. Two hundred and thirteen (213) acres of land produced 2,901 bushels of oats. The rice crop, which in "the Black County" was formerly 50,000,000 pounds, has also largely increased.

"The Black County" pays into the State treasury, in the form of taxes and revenue (including \$1 a ton on all phosphates digged in her streams), more money than any other of the thirty-two counties except Charleston and Richland. The rate of taxation is less than in any other county except two; there is no county in the Union better governed. The records of the criminal

courts show it to be the most peaceable county in the State.

Talk about the Southern Problem or the Negro Problem! There is no Southern Problem or Negro Problem; it has been solved. The colored people of "the Black County" and of the entire South are cultivating the soil for the owners of the soil; they are educating their children, caring for their families, improving themselves, and working out their own destinies.

There are several historic places in "the Black County," but none more interesting than the National Cemetery at Beaufort. Here, in an enclosure exceeding thirty acres in extent, lie the remains of ten thousand soldiers and sailors of the Union, who perished by battle or by the more fatal ravages of disease.

Through the generous exertions and contributions of Mrs. Eliza Potter, formerly of Charleston, a handsome monument has been erected to the memory of the brave men who are buried there. She is the lady whose ministrations to Federal soldiers, sick, wounded, and in prison at Charleston, illustrated what Mrs. Livermore calls the Heavenly side of war.

Somewhere in this Cemetery, among the many graves marked by that most pathetic of all epitaphs, *Unknown*, lie the bodies of Colonel Haldimand S. Putnam, of the Seventh New Hampshire Infantry, and Colonel Robert G. Shaw, of the Massachusetts Fifty-Fourth. Both of these officers were killed in the second assault on Battery Wagner, July 18, 1863, were buried originally in the sand of Morris Island, were disinterred after the war and reinterred in the Beaufort Cemetery. The following verses of Eliza B. Sedgwick are more appropriate to the pres-

ent grave of Shaw in Beaufort than to his place in the common trench at Wagner.

"Buried with a band of brothers,  
Who for him would fain have died  
Buried with the gallant fellows  
Who fell fighting by his side.

Buried with the men God gave him--  
Those whom he was sent to save;  
Buried with the martyred heroes,  
He has found an honored grave.

Buried where his dust is precious,  
Makes the soil a hallowed spot;  
Buried where by Christian patriot  
He shall never be forgot."

Putnam's remains received all the honors of sepulture which the circumstances of his death permitted, from the fraternal hands of his West Point classmate, General Robert H. Anderson, of the Confederate Army. These officers deserve special mention, because they were representative men. Shaw was a Massachusetts Republican of the school of Sumner and Andrew. Putnam was a Democrat of the school of Levi Woodbury and Franklin Pierce. Shaw fought on the Northern side, chiefly because the North favored the emancipation of the slaves; Putnam, because the Northern side was the Union side. The sentiment of liberty did much to stimulate the federal heart, but it was the sentiment of nationality which finally won. These sentiments were complimentary and mutually helpful to each other, just as the regiments of Putnam and Shaw supported each other. The time, I trust, will come, when the statue of Putnam and the statue of Shaw will be placed in that cemetery upon one pedestal, and when on that pedestal will be engraved those immortal words of Webster: "Liberty and Union—now and forever—one and inseparable."



## The Career of Gen. Robert Smalls.

Robert Smalls was born in Beaufort, S. C., April 5, 1839, and was the slave of John H. McKee, who had been nursed by Smalls' mother. He was kindly treated, but his lot was the lot of a slave, without education, without opportunity to improve his condition, shut in on all sides by walls of darkness.

In 1851, at the age of twelve, McKee removed to Charleston, where for about a year Smalls was employed as a waiter at the Planters' Hotel. Then, for about a year and a half, he was employed in driving a hoisting-horse on the wharves of Charleston. For the next seven years he worked in John Simmons' rigging loft. In 1860, the year of the National Democratic Convention at Charleston, McKee died, and Smalls became the property of his master's widow. In that year he attained the age of twenty-one years; but his lot remained the same, for slaves never attain their majority. His last service ashore was as stevedore at Charleston.

In July, 1861, when the civil war began, he was placed aboard the steamer Planter, nominally as a deck-hand and wheelsman; but he soon became virtually her pilot. It was in the steamer Planter that Captain Hamilton, of the Confederate Navy (formerly of the Federal Navy), made a survey of all the bars on the coast of South Carolina, Georgia and Florida, accompanied by Captain Ravenel, and it was by improving his opportunities as wheelsman during this survey that Smalls acquired that intimate knowledge of the coast which afterwards made him so trustworthy a pilot in the Federal Navy.

While a slave in the service of the Confederacy, Smalls helped to destroy the Federal light-house on Hunting Island and to lay torpedoes in Edisto River, for which he received \$16 a month, \$15 of which he paid to his mis-

tress. He carried guns and men to arm and man the forts at Bay Point and Hilton Head, Fort Gregg and Fort Walker. He carried Captain (afterwards General) Elliott's company, the Beaufort Artillery, to Bay Point, and Captain Wagner's company of artillery to Hilton Head.

While Dupont was actually engaged with these forts, the Planter arrived with Captain Hamilton and two companies of the First South Carolina Artillery (Regulars) to re-enforce the forts. Smalls did not mind being too late to reach them, and he watched the battle with wonder and admiration. The guns of the Wabash vomited their streams of fire in such rapid succession that the Confederates on board the Planter thought the Wabash was on fire.

In 1862, Brigadier-General Ripley, the Confederate commander under General Pemberton at Charleston (the same gentleman who attended the centennial celebration at Lexington), had the Planter as his despatch boat and flag ship. As the Planter moved up and down the narrow passages among the islands south of Charleston, Smalls and his slave comrades matured their plan for quitting the Southern Confederacy and taking refuge on board "the Lincoln gunboats," as the Federal ships were called, off Charleston Bar. The crew of General Ripley's gig were the first to act upon this plan. One night, when General Ripley had kept them waiting for him for some time they concluded not to wait any longer they ran away with his gig, and took her over the bar to the blockading fleet. If General Ripley could have caught Gabriel Pinckney and the rest of his gig's crew, who played this trick upon him, he probably would have flayed them alive. Pinckney and another of this gig's crew named Bull found remunerative employment as pilots in the Federal fleet.

and they more than intimated that Robert Smalls was liable to follow them, and to bring the Planter with him. Meantime Smalls did not hesitate to denounce as the meanest of mortals the men who had been so base as to run away. Until the very day of his sudden and unexpected departure with the Planter, Smalls enjoyed the entire confidence of the proprietor of the Planter, (who let her to the Confederacy for \$125 a day); of Captain Relay, her commander, and also of General Ripley himself. In person he much resembled Ripley, "barring his complexion"; and more than one gossiping person insinuated that he was General Ripley's son. He also bore some physical resemblance to Captain Relay. Ripley, Relay and Smalls being all rather short and strongly built, either of them, when at a distance or in hazy weather, might easily pass for any of the others.

It is but just to General Ripley to say, that this scandal of the gossips was wholly unfounded. It is understood that Smalls' father was Moses Goldsmith, a Charleston Jew, who has since acquired considerable wealth as a trader. His mother, whose name he bears, is the great granddaughter of a slave who was stolen from Africa and imported into South Carolina.

On May 12, 1862, the Planter, which had for two weeks been removing guns from Cole's Island to James' Island, returned to Charleston. That night all the officers slept on shore with their families; and Pilot Smalls determined not to lose this opportunity to put into execution his plan for running away.

While lying at South Commercial Wharf, twenty cords of wood were loaded. Smalls then steamed round to North Atlantic Wharf, where his wife and two children were concealed on board the steamer Etiwan, together with four other women and one other child. All these were taken on board the Planter, one at a time, and put below.

At 3.25, a. m., May 13th, the Planter started on her perilous adventure, carrying nine men, five women and three children. Passing Fort Johnson the Planter's steam-whistle blew the usual salute, and she proceeded down the bay. Approaching Fort Sumter, Smalls stood in the pilot house leaning out of the window with his arms folded across his breast, after the manner of Capt.

Relay, and his head covered with the huge straw hat which Capt. Relay commonly wore on such occasions.

The signal required to be given by all steamers passing out, was blown as coolly as if General Ripley were on board going out on a tour of inspection. Sumter answered by signal "All right," and the Planter headed toward Morris Island, then occupied by Hatch's Light Artillery, and passed beyond the range of Sumter's guns before anybody suspected anything was wrong. When at last the Planter was obviously going toward the Federal fleet off the bar, Sumter signalled toward Morris Island to stop her in her mad career. But it was too late. As the Planter approached the Federal fleet a white flag was displayed, but this was not at first discovered and the Federal steamers, supposing the Confederate rams were coming to attack them, stood out to deep water. But the ship Onward, Captain Nichols, which was not a steamer, remained, opened her ports, and was about to fire into the Planter when she noticed the flag of truce. Smalls delivered the Planter to Nichols, the Federal steamers returned to the bar, and the senior officer, Captain Parrot, sent the Planter and her company to Flag Officer Dupont at Port Royal. In his despatch to the Navy Department, on the next day, Dupont wrote:

"This man, Robert Smalls, is superior to any who have come into our lines—intelligent as many of them have been. His information has been most interesting, and portions of it of the utmost importance." Smalls was allowed \$1500 as his share of prize money, or salvage, due for the Planter. The others received \$400 apiece.

Gen. Saxton appointed Smalls as second lieutenant, and assigned him to duty in connection with the navy. Smalls served as pilot in the Crusader, Huron, Paul Jones and other vessels, and fought at Simmons' Bluff. He was pilot of the Keokuk during the battle between the ironclads and forts at Charleston, April 7, 1863, and remained at his post until she sunk, the following day.

The command of the Planter was first given to Acting Master Phoenix of the Navy, then to a Cape Cod officer of the army, whose name I will spare. Smalls was again acting as her pilot on December 1, 1863, when, as the Planter was passing through Folly Island Creek, the



Confederates opened upon her a heavy fire. This Cape Cod Captain was panic stricken, and in his terror he ran below and concealed himself in the coal-bunker. Smalls promptly took command and carried the vessel through. This was the second capture or the second saving of the Planter. Then it was, but not till then, that Smalls was commissioned as a Captain in the Quartermaster-General's Department, which office he held till the close of the war, Sept. 18, 1866, when he was honorably discharged.

Charleston having been "repossessed" by the Federal forces on February 18, 1865, the Planter was one of the first Federal vessels that entered that port, which she had left in so extraordinary a manner three years before. The enthusiasm of the colored people as then exhibited knew no bounds. The pilot of the Planter had become one of the three greatest men in America, in their regards—President Lincoln and General Saxton being the other two. A few weeks later, on the saddest day in American history, the day of the assassination of Lincoln, which was also the day

of the restoration of the Stars and Stripes over Sumter, the Planter was again in Charleston. On that day Smalls received on board the Planter the orator of that memorable occasion, Henry Ward Beecher, William Lloyd Garrison and George Thompson, and carried them to the historic fort. Many notable men met on that day, some whose renown at the time far exceeded the renown of the hero of the Planter. But, as Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "History often plays strange tricks with reputations." A century hence, perhaps, the hero of the Planter will occupy a much larger place upon the historian's page than many others who are now far more conspicuous. Many a history of the war has been published in this country, in which the hero of the Planter has not even been named. But in Europe, which stands to us, as it were, in the place of posterity, it is not so. The Count of Paris has given Smalls a niche in the gallery of notables in his history of the war, while wholly ignoring scores of others who were doubtless notables in their own esteem.

## NOTES.

### NOTE A.

#### The Landing of the Huguenots.

It has been suggested that Charlesfort was erected on Parris Island, and not on Port Royal Island, as stated on page 4.

There can be no better authority on such a subject than Capt. C. O. Boutelle of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, who has a personal and professional knowledge of the shores of South Carolina. Following the course which Ribault and his companions pursued after entering Port Royal, with the narratives of both Ribault and Ladonnière open before him, Capt. Boutelle, in a private letter which I am permitted to quote, arrives at the following conclusions, which agree with my own observations:

"1. That they went up the easterly arm of Port Royal Bay, i. e. Beaufort River. 2. That they went above Johnson's or Cowan's Creek on the east, which divides St. Helena from Ladies' Island, and above Archer's Creek, which divides Parris Island from Port Royal Island. 3. That shortly after passing Archer's Creek, they thought they had reached the main land, and landed on the left (or Port Royal Island) side of the river."

If these conclusions are established as they seem to be, the place of the landing of the Huguenots must have been at or very near "Old Fort plantator," where, a few years before the war, the Rev. Dr. Adams wrote his "South Side View of Slavery," and where Col. T. W. Higginson, during the war, lived and wrote portions of his "Army Life in a Black Regiment."

Live oaks are standing there to-day, which stood there in the time of Columbus; and the company which met in "Old Fort" grove to celebrate the issue of the Emancipation Proclamation (Jan. 1, 1863) may have sat under the same majestic trees which had shaded Ribault and his companions three centuries before.

Before I was better informed, I accepted Col. Higginson's statement, that the ruins of "Old Fort" are the ruins of Charlesfort. (Young Folks' History of the United States, p. 124; American Explorers, p. 148.) But a careful examination of these ruins convinced me that Col. Higginson is in error; and here too Capt. Boutelle agrees with me. In the letter already quoted, he says, "I, by no means, mean to be understood that the walls of concrete or tapia, now existing, were put there by the party whom Ribault left under command of Albert de la Pierria, to whose folly

and lack of control of his people the failure of the incipient colony is due. I have no sort of doubt that the work now there dates from the war of 1812. I was informed by the late Hor. H. A. S. Dearborn, formerly Mayor of Roxbury, Mass., that he personally assisted in the erection of two works on Port Royal Island, commanding the approaches to Beaufort. His father was Secretary of War, and he went there as assistant to the Engineer officer in charge. I have never searched at Washington to verify the matter, but am sure, from Gen. Dearborn's description, that the two works were at 'Old Fort,' and at 'Fort Lytleton,' where the ruins still exist, one mile below Beaufort." Ribault's fort could not have had bastions, as "Old Fort" has, for bastions were unknown in Ribault's time.

Capt. Boutelle is clear "that neither Ribault nor Ladonnière went into 'Ballast Creek' to make a landing, with the open marsh of Archer's Creek in sight just above them; but that they made their landing, and erected their work, of *earth and logs*, (not of *coquina*), upon the lower end of Port Royal Island, landing from what is now Beaufort River, and *not* Battery Creek."

The late Col. George P. Elliott, of Beaufort, insisted that he had discovered vestiges of Charlesfort on Parris Island, which others before him had claimed to be the place of Ribault's landing. But I doubt that there ever was a fort on Parris Island; and Capt. Boutelle says: "It seemed to me to require a lively imagination to make it out, when I first saw it, twenty-five years ago, nearly; and my experience since of the rapid decay of works,

which you and I can remember as strong enough sixteen years ago, goes far to confirm my scepticism as to an imperfect and perishable work built over three hundred and twenty years ago."

Wherever Ribault's fort stood, all traces of the structure have long since vanished from the earth. But I think the site of that structure is established with reasonable certainty. As to the cause of the failure of this first European and Protestant colony, Mr. Parkman, in his "Pioneers of France in the New World," pointedly says: "Had they put forth, to maintain themselves at Port Royal, the energy and resources which they exerted to escape from it, they might have laid the corner stone of a solid colony."

#### NOTE B.

In referring to geographical situations, the writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries must be pardoned for their inexactness, for they were without the instruments and means necessary to exactness. But such errors are still committed. Even the admirable and accurate Lord Macaulay, in his brilliant review of Ræke's History of the Popes, speaks of "the destruction of Port Royal," when he evidently has in mind the demolition of Fort Caroline and the massacre of the colony of Ribault and Ladonnière.

In Fairbanks' History of St. Augustine, the site of Fort Caroline, and the place of the massacre of Ribault and his whole command, on Anastasia Island, are indicated with as much exactness as can now be attained.





























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